

April 21, 1996 by milevenmirkwood

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Summary:

A special day for a special couple.

1. Chapter 1

Author's Note:

So yeah I've been working on this fic for a while and once you read it, you'll realize why it was kind of challenging. This was originally gonna be a long one-shot, but i was think it works better as a two-shot (I actually thought of the second part before the first), but anyway onto the story!

April 20th, 1996

A young man and woman drive past the "Welcome to Hawkins" sign. The two smile at each other before the man returns his gaze to the road. The woman bites her lip and squeezed his hand two times. "I'm scared." it meant. The man looked away for the road for a second to look at her.

"It's okay to be nervous, but don't worry. This is supposed to be the happiest weekend of our lives." he said, eyes bright and smile brighter. She felt her worries melt away and she smiled back at him. The woman then squeezed the man's hand three times and he squeezed three times back.

...

The young couple pull into the Wheeler driveway and the front door flies open as their family flows out. The man is barely out of the car when his mother pulls him into her arms. He groans in embarrassment, but smiles widely and hugs her back. The man pulls away and shares a brief hug with his father. The young woman is hugging her mother eagerly, eyes welling slightly. She had seen her mother a couple of months ago, and talked to her on the phone every Sunday, but the sight of her on this weekend brought her to tears. The young woman reluctantly pulled away from her mother to throw her arms around father's waist. The older man chuckled and hugged his daughter tightly, kissing the top of her head. The young man then greets the young woman's mother with a hug and her father with a firm handshake while the young woman hugs the young man's

mother and father.

The couple made their way into the Wheeler house only for the young couple to flinch at the sound of "Surprise!" Standing in the the living room are all their friends along with the young man's sister and the young woman's brothers. The woman's older brother snapped a picture of the shocked couple with a smile.

"I thought you guys were getting in tonight!" the young man said, shocked.

"Nope we got in last night!" their red headed friend said, smiling widely

The young woman squealed and pulled her best girlfriend into a tight embrace, smiling so wide her face started to hurt. She then pulled away to see the young man hugging his best friends. The young woman hugged her friends one by one, hugging her brother a little longer before hugging her older brother and the young man's sister. The young man briefly hugged the woman's older brother and hugged his older sister a little longer than he intended.

"You guys!" The young man said, looking amongst the group of the people he loved the most minus a certain hyper blonde teen.

"Where's Holly?" the young man asked.

"She went for a run. She should be back soon." his sister explained and the young man rolled his eyes playfully. His sixteen-year-old sister had been on an extremely strict diet the past few months, determined to lose weight before the big day.

At that moment, the parents came in with just the man's luggage and the couple exchange a look.

"Calm down you two. You can spend a night a part! It's tradition anyway." the man's mother said exasperatedly and the man avoided the gaze of the woman's father.

The man excused himself to go unpack while the young woman went into the living room with their friends to catch up. He looked around his room to see it unchanged from when he moved out except it had

recently been dusted. He smiled at the photo on his dresser of him and his friends on graduation, they were all smiling widely. That day seemed so far away and he couldn't pull himself from the memory. A throat clearing pulled him back and he looked over to see her leaning against the doorway.

"Hard at work?" she asked and he chuckled.

She approached him and stood on the tips of her toes to peak over his shoulder.

"Remember how loud your dad was when you walked on stage?" he asked and it was her turn to chuckle.

"Yeah. Everyone around him jumped 5ft." she said with a smile.

The young man turned around, causing her to lose her footing and fall into him. He caught her just as he fell against dresser.

"Are you okay?" she asked, looking up at him with concern.

The man bit back a groan and scrunched his face up in pain. "I'm okay. My muscle broke my fall."

"What muscle?" she asked with a giggle and he gasped dramatically.

"I'm sorry what was that?" he teased, leaning down.

"I said 'Wh-'" she was interrupted as he scooped her up in his arms and she squealed.

The woman giggled as he twirled her around before laying her gently on the bed. Before she had a chance to playfully scold him, she shrieked as he tickled her sides.

"What was that?" he asked over her cries.

"S-stop!" she said through laughs.

"Say 'You're the strongest, sexiest man alive.'" he said with a smirk.

Another throat clearing made them freeze and they slowly looked up

to see the man's mother standing in the doorway with her arms crossed. The two quickly separated and looked at her bashfully.

"I don't mean to interrupt, but your sister's home from her jog. Be a good brother and go say hello." she reprimanded, but her eyes were bright and teasing.

The man gave the woman a sheepish smile before leaving the room. The woman followed close after, pausing to look at his mother. His mother sighed, but smiled at her rubbed her back affectionately as she left the room.

A few hours later, everyone was chit chatting in the backyard with drinks in their hands and smiles on their faces. The young couple mingled with their loved ones excitedly when a glass clinking took their attention.

To the young man's surprise, the woman's father stood with a stone face.

"Attention everyone if I could have a moment of your time. Today we are here to celebrate these two crazy kids." he said and everyone laughed. "I never thought this day would come, where I'd see my little girl blossom into an angelic young woman. After Sarah, I didn't know if I'd... but then a little girl with a filthy pink dress stumbled onto more porch. Tired, alone and scared. All the feelings I felt one too many times and I took her in. For the first time in a long time I felt like I was given a second chance. Sweetheart you've made me happier than you will ever know. I love you and I want you to be the happiest little girl on the planet. And he makes you happy."

The couple looked at each other, the man's face filled with appreciation and her's filled with adoration as tears streamed down her face. The man then pulled her close, he towering over her from behind as he wrapped his arms around her neck. She leaned her head back against his chest and continued to look at her father.

"I've always like the boy. He reminded me of how I'd want to be at his age. Smart, loyal, courageous as hell. Everything you'd want in a son in law. Hypothetically." he added quickly and everyone chuckled again while the man chuckled nervously. The woman looked up at

him with a smile.

"All jokes aside, if I'd want anyone with my little girl it'd be you son. You make her happier than a cart full of Eggos and I can say that you'd be a welcome to the family. To Mike and El!" he finished as he raised his glass.

"To Mike and El!" everyone echoed with clinked glasses.

2. Chapter 2

Summary for the Chapter:

El gets pre-wedding jitters and learns a secret about Mike

Notes for the Chapter:

Ahh the second part! The first was more of an introduction so this one is really meaty and I love it! I'll see you guys at the end.

“She needs you.” the young woman’s mother said to her husband in a panic as she barged into the man’s basement.

The young man paused from his nervous pacing to look up at her. “What’s wrong? Is she okay?” he asked, voice dripping with concern and eyes wide. He was vaguely aware that his curly headed friend now placed a calming hand on his shoulder.

The woman’s father rose from the couch and rushed up the basement stairs, ignoring the boy’s yells and exclams for answers. Despite his age, he was quick to the second floor and walked into the older sister’s room. There his little girl was surrounded by the boy’s mother, sisters and her red headed best friend. His heart fell heavy as he saw her sitting on the ottoman, chest rising and falling heavily as her pink eyes leaked fat tears and body rocked with sobs. “I can’t. I can’t I’m sorry I can’t.” she repeated over and over despite the ladies rubbing her back affectionately and whispering reassurances. “Daddy.” she said between sobs as she noticed her father in the vanity mirror’s reflection.

“We don’t know what’s wrong with her.” the younger sister said, briefly looking at him.

“Leave her alone with me.” he said curtly and the women nodded, leaving the room.

"Sweetheart what's wrong?" he asked as he approached his daughter. She said nothing and just threw her arms around his center, burying her face in his torso.

He started to stroke her hair comfortingly when he noticed that it was styled, curled and pinned up with a rhinestone clip. His heart felt heavier as he realized how beautiful his little girl looked. He, not surprisingly, was not interested in the whole planning of the event so this was the first he'd seen of her dress. It was a double strapped ivory floor-length dress with a sheer layer of light pink flowers that clustered at the top and cascaded down. It was beautiful, although it showed a little too much cleavage for his liking.

She looked up at him, her big hazel eyes red at the rim and her makeup was running but that didn't matter.

"Daddy I can't. I can't do it." She whispered tearfully.

"What is it honey? Do you not want to marry him?" he asked and she was shaking her head fiercely before he even finished the sentence.

"No I do! I do I-I just can't." she finished softly, looking down.

Her father sighed and cupped her chin, tilting it upward to look at him.

"Use your words." He urged and she bit her lip.

"I... what if he doesn't want me? What if he... what if he thinks he made a mistake? Marrying me? We've been together since we were teenagers and what if he gets tired of me?" she said softly as more tears ran down her face.

Her father couldn't help but let out a bark laughter that made her flinch slightly.

"Honey is that all? You think he's gonna grow tired of you?" he asked and she nodded shyly. "Honey he loves you more than probably life itself. I know you think I don't like him--"

"Do you?" she interrupted.

“Don’t interrupt. You think I’d let that boy stick around if he didn’t love you from the bottom of his heart? Treat you like you deserve the world and the universe and all that’s in between?” he asked and she started to answer.

“Ellie I know that that boy loves you more than anything imaginable. The way he looks at you and smiles at you. Has he ever told you about those months you were gone?” the father asked, stroking her back as he felt her flinch at the thought of those dark months. The young woman shook her head. When she returned, the girl had been swept up in a pleasant wave of love and affection and relief that she and everyone pushed away those feelings of grief and despair. Everyone was more focused on creating a normal happy life for her.

“We... we don’t like to talk about it.” she said softly.

“Well s’not good to go into a marriage with secrets. I think it’s best if he told you himself.” the father said and her grip tightened on him.

“No daddy please. Tell me. What happened?” she asked, looking up at him with her hazel eyes begging.

The father sighed and slowly unraveled her arms from around him.

“You’re gonna want to sit down for this.” he said, not meeting her eyes and she slowly sat back down on the ottoman. The father sat down on the bed and let out a shaky breath, the events of that back still fresh in his memory as if it happened yesterday. He’d never admit it, but that day scared him more than anything in the Upside Down. Even when he was a reckless jackass cop in the big city, he had never encountered anything like that. “It was a late September day...” he started.

“Chief Karen Wheeler’s on line one.” Flo’s came through the phone and even through the device, Hopper could tell she was curious, borderline nosy.

“Karen Wheeler?” Hopper wondered out loud before pressing the button. “Did she say what she wanted?”

“Just that it was urgent.”

"Okay put her though." Hopper said, feeling the need to put out his cigarette like the mother of three would chastise him through the phone as if they were in person.

"It's going to be okay honey. It's okay. Ted will you help me for God's sake?!" Karen exclaimed exasperatedly over the sound of an annoying child's cries.

"Hello Mrs. Wheeler? Can you hear me?" he said loudly.

"Hello Chief? Ted!" Karen yelled.

After a few moments of scuffling, the child's cries faded away and he clearly heard Karen Wheeler. "Chief Hopper are you still there?"

"Yeah what's so urgent Mrs. Wheeler?"

"My son Michael. He wasn't in his room this morning. I've been waiting all day like maybe he just left a little early..." Karen continued, but Hopper was paying no mind as the tale was sounding too familiar. No, he thought.

"When's the last time you saw him? How was he acting?" Hopper asked urgently and Karen hesitated.

"He... he was acting his usual self, bickering with Nancy and talking about school." she said and Hopper noticed the change in her pitch of voice. Even though Hopper barely knew the boy, he knew that she'd been telling the truth. Not the whole truth, but the truth. That is what he'd do because it's what everyone expected him to do. On occasion for that past year, Jim Hopper caught the exclusive look at the real Michael Wheeler.

"Have you asked his friends?" Hopper asked, thinking back to just a year ago when the three boys sat just a few feet from where he was now bickering annoyingly. It never ceased to amaze Hopper how much other children irritated him despite the fact that he is-was a-

"Yes. None have them have seen him and I got a call from the school that he was absent." Karen said, panic settling in her voice.

"Okay I'll send some officers out to look for him. If we find him, you'll be the first to know." Hopper said, deep in thought and voice sounding

unfortunately far away. He was pulled from his thought as he heard Karen's choked sob in his ear.

"Please. Please find him Chief." she said before abruptly hanging up.

Hopper hung up the phone and put on his cigarette. He rubbed his forehead for a second before grunting as he stood, grabbing his hat on his way out the door.

"Chief?" Callahan asked as Hopper passed him on his way out, clearly on a mission.

"Going out." Hopper said curtly.

"Do you need back-" Callahan started when Hopper interrupted him with a no.

Until sundown, Hopper scoured the woods looking for the Wheeler boy. He'd run into Mike sometimes in the woods, the boy donning his green jacket and breathless as he screamed out her name. The two formed an unspoken bond as Hopper was nearly caught refilling the wooden box. He couldn't very well tell the boy that the same girl he'd been searching so hard for was the same girl he'd sold out to the bastards at Hawkins Lab. Hopper watched as the boy yanked at his black hair, breath coming out in thick fogs as his chest heaved and he loud out pained screams. The sight struck a chord in the man and the next time he saw the boy in the woods, they stared silently at each other. The two began to search until the sun went down and Hopper suddenly went in the opposite direction, silently telling the boy that it was time to leave. The woods were unusually silent today and Hopper knew that he wasn't here. All of a sudden a dark thought went through his head and started to take root and Hopper knew there was a reason that thought stuck. "She can do things.. make you fly."

"No." his daughter breathed, tears flowing faster as her hand flew to her mouth in pain and disbelief.

The edge of the quarry was where Hopper found Mike, his faded Nike sneakers dangling off the edge as he pulled up in his squad car.

"Kid! Kid what are you doing? Get away from there!" Hopper yelled, heart hammering in his chest at the sight.

"Go away." Mike yelled, voice faint and far away and watched as a pebble under his foot bounced off the edge.

"Mike. Mike don't do it. Think about your family, your friends." Hopper said, sounding cliché but he didn't know what else to say.

"She did it before. Everything's gonna be okay. She did it before." Mike said, hardly aware that he was speaking as he watched the pebble.

"Mike she'll come back and then what? What's gonna happen after that?" Hopper asked, slowly taking a step forward. Even from his angle, he could tell that Mike was smiling.

"She'll come live with me. That's what I told her. Nancy's gonna start applying for schools soon, so when she leaves El can take her room. It's already girly so she'd love it. I don't think she knows a lot of colors, but I think she likes pink. We can start tutoring her so she can come to school with us. She can meet Mr. Clarke and he can teach her a bunch of cool science stuff, maybe she can help us win the science fair but only if she wants. W-we can go to the Snowball. I promised we would. She would have loved it." Mike finished solemnly. "She would have loved it, but we can go this year. All this time, I've been searching and all I need to do is jump. I didn't think I'd reach the bottom when I did it and I didn't because she saved me. She saved us all and it's time for me to save-"

Mike was cut off, unaware that while he was talking Hopper was sneaking up on him. He assumed the faint crunching was that pebble bouncing its way down the cliff, but it was Hopper. Mike thrashed and screamed as Hopper hooked his arm around Mike's waist and carried him to the car.

"GET OFF! GET OFF ME I NEED TO DO IT! I NEED TO DO IT FOR HER GET THE HELL OFF OF ME! STOP I'M SAVING HER! I'M SAVING HER!"

The father was aware that his daughter was crying harder than ever, but he sat still on the edge of the bed, the boy's yells echoing off his head.

"Don't you ever think that boy doesn't love you. He only knew you for a week and he was yelling like he lost his family. I saw me. I saw me that day and as much as I love your mother, I'd give anything to

have Sarah and Diane back. I saw him and I saw me.” He finished as he looked down, eyes burning with tears. “He’ll always love you. He’d die for you, for a chance, a glimmer of hope.”

The daughter let out a sob and the father finally gathered her in his arms again. She shook with sobs as her father rubbed her back affectionately. The two stood like that for a while until a commotion outside the door broke apart from their embrace.

“Screw bad luck! I need to see her!” they heard a familiar voice and the daughter felt the corners of her mouth turn up.

An anxious knock at the door came and though the father didn’t believe in bad luck, he sped for the door. He stared at the boy, well man, and pulled the door closer to himself to shield him from his daughter.

“What’s going on? Is she okay? Does she need-“ he started, shifting from foot to foot.

“She’s gonna be alright son.” the father said and despite his anxiousness, the man felt a little better at that word. Son, whether her father meant it in a paternal way or literally. The father realized his wording and sighed.

“Can I see her? Please just for a second?” he pleaded. The father looked back at her and she answered with a small nod.

He had barely made room before the boy was barreling past him, making his way over to her. They said nothing as they met, she throwing her arms around his neck despite he being over five inches taller than her. He wasted no time wrapping his arms around her and the father could tell he was whispering sweet nothings to her.

The father shifted uncomfortably as he could do nothing but watch the two as the older sister’s bedroom didn’t have a lot to offer to interest him. The boy pulled away only to cup her face, asking and probing and needing to help her and calm her. She whispered back as he quickly wiped her tears away. The boy looked down for a second and the father could see that the boy was starting to tear up himself. Neither one of them expected her to hit him.

Not violently, but passionately a hard slap to his chest. The boy was shocked, but didn't have time to form as she hit him again harder. And then a third time until he grabbed her hands and she didn't fight back.

"I'm so El. I'm so sorry, but I needed you." he said tearfully and the girl broke down again. "I'm sorry." he said, pulling her into his arms again but he was crying just as hard. Neither one of them paid the father any mind as they sobbed together.

After what seemed like forever, painfully for the father but blissfully, they pulled away.

"You look beautiful." the man breathed and the woman let out a chuckle.

"After all that, that's all you have to say?"

The man then grabbed her hands.

"The only thing I can remember is my vows cause I've been memorizing them for months." he said truthfully and she laughed again.

A gentle rap at the door caught all their attention. Standing in the doorway were their mothers, his sisters and her best friend.

"Is everything okay?" the boy's mother asked and they all nodded, drying their tears and smiling.

"Good because we're going to have to do your makeup all over." The younger sister said, slightly annoyed at her expensive makeup going to waste and they all laughed.

"Alright Mike it's time to say goodbye." the woman's mother said and the couple looked at each other. He squeezed her hand three times and she smiled adoringly as she squeezed three times back. The boy slid past the women and the father looked back at his daughter inquiringly. She mouthed a thank you and he felt himself smile before being shooed out by the females. He shook his head before heading back down to the basement.

"I now pronounce you man and wife! You may now kiss the bride!"

"Happy Holly made us take those dancing lessons after all?" El said as Mike twirled her.

"Well in our defense when's the last time we danced together? Prom?" he asked, pulling her back into his embrace as they swayed on the street.

They were wed in a clearing of the forest off Mirkwood and while the others were back at the Wheeler house setting up last minute things for the reception, the newlyweds took their time walking home. The sun shining and birds chirping mixed with newlywed bliss made El want to sing so she did. That's when Mike looked around before stopping to pull her into his arms.

"We should dance more often." El said and Mike smiled boyishly, gesturing to their swaying bodies. "Not now!" she said with a smile.

"Do you want to stop?" Mike asked, spinning her so her back was to her front, their hands clasped. She shook her head, leaning back against him and humming softly.

"Neither do I, Ms. Byers." Mike said and El looked up at him.

"It bothers you, doesn't it?" El asked and Mike smiled a little.

"I mean I've always wanted you to be Mrs. Wheeler, but it's your name El. Plus I don't need you to take my name for you to prove anything." he said. El pulled away from him and turned around, only to lean up on her toes and pull him down so their lips met.

Mike deepened the kiss and felt the same damn butterflies and fireworks since their first kiss in the cafeteria in '83.

"You're too good to me." She said as they pull away, looking in his dark eyes with affection.

“Stop.” he replied, silencing her with another kiss. “I love you.”

“I love you more.” El said back.

The two pull away and continue down the street on the beautiful April day of '96. They made their way to the Wheeler house was were showered with rice, smiled for the cameras and yelped as they smeared cake on each other faces. They laughed and cried at the speeches and swayed together some more as the sun set into a perfectly chilly night. The couple said their tearful goodbyes to their loved ones as they left for the airport for their honeymoon and unseen future. It wouldn't be easy and they both knew it, but they seemed to breathe easier around each other as if they were one.

Mike looked over at El, who stared out the window at the night sky around them. She felt him looking at her but she continued to look. El squeezed his hand three times and Mike hesitated. She looked over at him and slapped him lightly at his smirk at her panic.

“Mouthbreather.” she said with a smile and he smiled boyishly before relaxing into the seat, closing his eyes. El lifted the arm rest to snuggle into his side, smiling as they drifted off into a blissful sleep as man and wife.

Notes for the Chapter:

Those two make me so happy and I absofruitely love them. Next I kind of want to work on some hardships cause everything can't be sunshine and rainbows and Eggos. But did you guys like this? Should I write more like this?

If you liked this please leave a comment or kudos! I love you guys and thank you so much for reading!

Author's Note:

I was gonna throw their names in randomly in the middle just as a little shocker or whatever, but I decided to save it for the end. So that was the first

part and I'm gonna try an have self control and not upload this until the second part is done or almost complete (one of my many faults). I'd love some feedback on this type of writing and I love you guys! Thanks so much for reading! <3 <3 <3